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PROGRAM Comment on the News STATION WRC Radio
NBC Network

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SUBJECT No Time to Think

MARVIN KALB: This is Marvin Kalb with Comment on the News.

Sometimes, with the change of seasons and administrations, it is easy to forget and disquieting to remember that our leaders have no time to think.

That in one minute.

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KALB: Become Secretary of State, for example, and how quickly you become overwhelmed with problems. Not just the obvious ones, either, like organizing your staff and getting familiar with the politic mosaics in Mozambique or Moscow, paying courtesy calls on key members of Congress, and working out a working relationship with your supposed colleagues at the White House.

That's all bad enough, but there's another kind of problem, and a rather insidious one at that. It does not confront you, it sneaks up. The cumulative result of all of the appointments and trips to the UN or the Mideast is that you realize late in the day that you have not had a moment to yourself, a moment to think. Not about selfish problems either, but the diplomatic problems you get paid to solve.

These jobs, Secretary of State, President, Director of the CIA, to name just a few, are man-eaters. You take them on full of energy and plans and concepts that have taken you years to fashion, and then they take you on. Your schedule becomes a daily battleground for time, whom to see, when, who's more important, what's more important. The day ends before it's actually begun, and you

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